

Smoke gets in your eyes



Jensen's engaged to Danneel now. Jared's hurting - badly.

They said someday you'll find
All who love are blind
Oh, when your heart's on fire
You must realize
Smoke gets in your eyes

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If you just walked away
What could I really say?
And would it matter anyway?
It wouldn't change how you feel

Jensen has a photograph of Jared in his wallet. It's just a small one, a perfect fit for the section where he keeps all his important cards.

In the photograph, Jared's laughing. It's not the loud, sharing-with-everybody laugh that the man so often breaks out into; it's much more secret. Very few people get to see Jared laugh like that.

Jensen used to be one of them.

He hates the photograph, but for some reason this never stops him from nudging it out of the safe, little pocket and staring at it, his thumb running over the peeking dimple reverently.

Around him, the room is barren and cold; empty in ways a home should never be. There are no photographs pinned up on walls, no patter of claws on wooden floors, no random candy stashes peeking out from cabinets, no softly singing radio accompanied by a not-so-gifted voice, no *life*. And, instead of warm cocoa butter and vanilla, the air smells of expensive perfume and detergent.

This isn't home. It probably never will be.

He tries to envision it, his life here in ten years time, and he sees himself sitting in the very same uncomfortably stylish armchair, the air still lacking the softness of cocoa butter.

His stomach convulses, a sharp pang of pain racing through him. His eyes fall back down to the photograph, at what he used to have.

Not a day goes by without him wishing he could change what happened.

Not a night passes without loneliness.

Not a moment slips away without him feeling the ache.

Remember those photographs we took on the boat in Spain
I took them down and ripped them up and threw them all away
Remember on the back of one you wrote we were meant to be
But, that doesn't really matter now, cause you don't mean a thing to me

Baby, you shoulda told me from find the start
Thought I was your only, Till you put me on the self and found somebody else

I never thought that you would ever do that, Everything we had is gone
Said you loved me, Said you'd never leave me, Maybe I just heard you wrong
Cause I'm damaged, I'm damaged, Don't know what to do
Baby, I'm damaged, so, so damaged because of you

There's loud banging from his front door, it's been going on for ages, but Jared has no intention of moving from his spot on the floor. He has Sadie's head resting on his knee and a bottle of Jack Daniels resting on his thigh. He isn't drunk – not yet, at least – but he *is* debating the benefits of downing the rest of the bottle so he can at least get a full night's rest.

He hears a smash from a nearby window and only that jolts him from his contemplation.

In a previous time he would have leapt up, grabbed a weapon and stalked towards the sound, but things change: he doesn't care any longer.

When Misha steps into the room he's nearly disappointed.

"What the hell, Jared? I've been out there for nearly half an hour."

"Sorry," he mumbles, taking a swig from the bottle. He growls as it's yanked out of his hands, but Misha merely shakes his head and walks away. Clanking and glugging is audible from the kitchen sink and then the man is back.

"Shower."

Jared's protests are ignored as the man shoves him in the direction of the bathroom.

He undresses lethargically, fingers numb – almost as if they've forgotten how to do this. When he steps under the spray, he winces, but doesn't bother to change the scalding heat. The burn feels good. *Real*.

It's only when he hears banging on the bathroom door that he realizes he's been watching the water spiral down the drain for the past twenty minutes.

"You alive in there, kid?"

"I'm not a kid," he murmurs, not caring that Misha can't hear him. His eyes slide closed and he begins to scrub soap over his exhausted body. "Not a kid."

When he eventually steps out of the bathroom, into his bedroom, it's to find Misha strewn across the bed, taking up as much space as possible and looking for all the world as if he belongs there.

"Uhm..." Jared murmurs, only to realize he's far too tired to give a crap. He turns towards his closet and rifles through, pulling out sweats and a tee. Ignoring Misha's wolf-whistling, he finishes dressing and turns to the man.

Misha's lips turn up in a warm smile, blue eyes twinkling. "Better?"

Jared reluctantly nods and shoves the man's legs aside, making room for himself to slip under the covers. A few seconds slip past before he freezes, realizing this is the first time since Jensen that he's been in this bed.

"Hey, man. You okay?" Misha's voice asks softly, breaking through his daze.

He turns his head towards the man, meeting his eyes and seeing only understanding within them. With a swallow, he manages to nod, "Yeah... Just... will you stay? I... I just... never mind, forget it..." he cuts off, hanging his head with a flush.

Misha just squirms around, getting beneath the covers fully dressed, and grinning from ear to ear. "Thought you'd never ask."

After lying there for several moments, wanting to say something but never managing to find exactly what it is tugging at the tip of his tongue, Jared rolls over, “Night, Misha.”

The covers are pulled up over his neck, and fingers skim gently along his shoulder as the reply comes, “Night, kid.”



I fall to pieces,
Each time I see you again.
I fall to pieces.
How can I be just your friend?

You want me to act like we've never kissed.
You want me to forget, pretend we've never met.
And I've tried and I've tried, but I haven't yet.
You walk by and I fall to pieces.

I fall to pieces,
Each time someone speaks your name.
I fall to pieces.
Time only adds to the flame.

You tell me to find someone else to love,
Someone who'll love me too, the way you used to do.
But each time I go out with someone new,
You walk by and I fall to pieces.

You walk by and I fall to pieces.

“Mish?” Jared whispers, half hoping that the man is asleep. The room is silent but for the faint music drifting from the television, where movie credits roll.

The man shifts slightly, adjusting the legs he’s got slung over Jared’s lap. “What is it?” he mumbles back.

Unconsciously hugging Misha’s knees to his chest, Jared stares down at the coffee table, biting his lip as he wonders where to start.

When he eventually does begin, his voice is blank, separated from himself. “I fell for Jensen in the first season.... He’d missed a mark, I was being thrown through the air, and he’d forgotten that he was supposed to jump in front of me and stop me flying. I ended up slamming headfirst into a wall.... My head was bleeding, the medics said I had minor concussion, and I was pretty dizzy, but... it was the look on Jensen’s face when he realized what had happened... He looked so scared, so guilty, so *worried*... His hands kept running over my face, pushing my hair out of my eyes... He was... anyway...

“After that, it only got worse... it was why Sandy and I broke up, I couldn’t lie to her... But... I was so scared that he would find out; that it would ruin the friendship we had... But... the end of the second season... when Sam died... Jensen was such a wreck afterwards... Eric yelled ‘cut’ and Jensen took off running, I followed... he was still crying from being Dean, but before I could say or do anything, he had me pinned against a tree, his hands in my hair and he was kissing me... like he couldn’t breathe without...” Jared lets out a sigh, running a hand roughly over his face.

“So, we got together... It was so perfect, Mish... just... I loved him, you know? And... I knew he was still seeing Danneel, but he said he would tell her soon, that we’d be together. And I believed him... I believed it all... I even...” Jared cuts off, staring at the passageway leading to the bedroom. “There’s a ring in the backpack under the bed... I was just waiting for *Supernatural* to end... I just... I was so sure we would be together forever...”

“Then... three months ago, he told me it was over. And...” he laughs hollowly, “yeah, that’s about it...”

Misha lets out a long breath and reaches out. Before Jared even realizes what’s going on, he’s sprawled length-wise over the couch, pinned between Misha and the back of the couch, and tightly enclosed in Misha’s arms.

“For the sake of our dignity,” Misha whispers into his ear, “Let’s pretend that this conversation was manly and totally un-chick-flicky, with no girly cuddling or anything like that. Deal?”

Jared snorts softly, relaxing into the man’s arms, “Asshole.”

Misha gasps, sounding scandalized, “You blaspheme against an angel of the lord? Oh, how dare you?”

Shaking his head with a smile, Jared closes his eyes and sinks into the cushions, breathing in the cool scent of freshly cut grass.

I can think of younger days when living for my life
Was everything a man could want to do.
I could never see tomorrow, but I was never told about the sorrow.

And how can you mend a broken heart?
How can you stop the rain from falling down?
How can you stop the sun from shining?
What makes the world go round?
How can you mend this broken man?
How can a loser ever win?
Please help me mend my broken heart and let me live again.

I can still feel the breeze that rustles through the trees
And misty memories of days gone by
We could never see tomorrow, no one said a word about the sorrow.

And how can you mend a broken heart?
How can you stop the rain from falling down?
How can you stop the sun from shining?
What makes the world go round?
How can you mend this broken man?
How can a loser ever win?
Please help me mend my broken heart and let me live again.

He parks on the corner of Abbey Lane, just close enough to see the crowd of people gathered in the church garden. There's a white arch, beneath which he can just make out the bride and groom.

He has no idea why he's here; maybe he just had to see the door to that part of his life being padlocked shut.

Half an hour ticks past, a bell chimes, followed by loud applause, and a brightly colored object is sent flying into the audience – the bouquet.

It's over. No more feeble hope left.

Jared watches as the crowd follows the married couple to a waiting limo. He watches as it disappears over the horizon. Then he starts the ignition and drives in the opposite direction.

He parks on a bridge that arches over a wide river. He walks slowly towards the edge, a tiny velvet box in his fist.

After staring down at the rushing water, he reaches out, uncurling his fingers, watching a future sink into the depths. There are no more maybes, no more.

They're writing songs of love, but not for me.
A lucky star's above, but not for me.
With love to lead the way
I've found more clouds of grey
Than any Russian play could guarantee.
I was a fool to fall and get that way;

Although I can't dismiss the memory of his kiss, I guess he's not for me.

He's knocking on a door, but not for me.
He'll plan a two by four, but not for me.
I know that love's a game;
I'm puzzled, just the same,
Was I the moth or flame?
I'm all at sea.
It all began so well, but what an end!

This is the time a feller needs a friend,
When every happy plot ends with the marriage knot,
And there's no knot for me.

"Jared..." his voice murmurs huskily through the darkness, making Jared smile and roll closer to the man.

"Yeah, Jens?" the younger man replies softly, his hand skimming along the muscled chest beside him; he inches closer until his head is cushioned under his friend's chin, but a frown creases his forehead as he realizes just how tense Jensen has become. "Jensen, what's the matter?"

"This..." There's a long, heavy pause, in which Jensen swallows, his throat bobbing slightly. Then, in a hoarse whisper, Jensen gets out. "This wasn't why I needed to speak to you..."

Jared's frown deepens and he sits up, "What do you mean?"

"I can't do this... I can't do this anymore...." All the blood rushes from Jared's face, and he draws himself away from the other man's body; the words shattering everything into irreparable pieces.

"This... this is a joke, right?" Jared stammers, "You're joking." When Jensen doesn't even look at him, he chokes out brokenly, "Why?"

"Jared... man, I don't want this life. I want kids... I want a wife... I don't want to live like this anymore."

"But... we can get kids. Jensen there are so many programs we could- or we could adopt, we can have kids someday... Jensen, you don't have to do this... Please... Jens-"

Jensen merely continues as if Jared hadn't spoken, "I asked Danni to marry me... She said yes."

Falling from the bed, Jared lands painfully on his knees when his feet get caught in the sheets, but he can't bring himself to care. All that matters is putting himself as far from Jensen as possible. But Jensen moves after him, his arm outstretched, "Jay... I've been cheating on her for you. But we both knew this couldn't last. We're risking too much for-"

Before Jensen can finish the sentence, Jared chokes out brokenly, "-Get out." His arms tighten around his chest in a feeble attempt to quell his body's shaking. He stares through blurry eyes at the carpeted floor and mutters. "Just get out."

The older man hasn't finished yet. He goes on to break Jared further. "We've bought a place across town. I'll be moving out on Saturday."

A soft, shredded sound escapes Jared's lips, and he stumbles from the room, unable to stand another moment with the man. After blindly colliding into the walls several times, Jared finally makes it to the bathroom, where he slides the bolt into place and falls to his knees.

He's naked. Between his legs he can feel Jensen's come trickling out, but instead of the usual grossed-out delight, tonight he feels only disgust. A few minutes later, he hears a familiar rumble from outside – Jensen's truck pulling away – and the hollow pit grows in his stomach.

When Jensen had arrived home late, Jared hadn't thought much about it. He'd figured that something had delayed Castiel and Dean's shoot. So when Jensen had stepped across the threshold of their bedroom and quietly lowered himself beside Jared, his hand moving to stroke through Jared's hair, Jared had only been filled with sleepy-love.

Jensen had whispered something about needing to talk, but Jared had just tugged the man down, tasting the lips he'd missed all day.

Things had escalated from there, but not once had Jensen given any indication as to what was coming. Jared had been caught completely unawares; caught at a time when he felt most secure.

What hurts most, above everything else, is the fact that he believed Jensen's lies, time and time again. Promises and whispered words of love – they filled Jared's life. Jensen fabricated a Utopia in which he'd leave Danneel, he and Jared would continue living together, one day maybe even marriage would become an option, but whatever they'd choose to do, it would be together.

Looking back, he realizes just how naïve he's been.

Staggering into the shower, he desperately scrubs at himself in an attempt to rid his body of the dirt he feels crawling beneath his skin. All this time it's just been a sordid affair, a dirty secret that they hid from the world. As Jensen put it, the older man's been cheating on Danneel 'for' Jared; so all this must be Jared's fault.

Bitter tears finally break out, mapping their way down his cheeks and disappearing down the drain.

His fist lashes out twice, cracking loudly against the tiles. Blinding pain takes over and he crumbles to the floor, curling in on himself.

Just walk away
Just say goodbye
Don't turn around now you may see me cry
I mustn't fall apart
Or show my broken heart
Or the love I feel for you

So walk away
And close the door
And let my life be as it was before
And I'll never never know
Just how I let you go
But there's nothing left to say

Just walk away
